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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003600

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: FRATTINI TO BE NAMED ITALY'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

CLASSIFIED BY: ACTING DCM THOMAS COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) ON JULY 19, PAOLO DIONISI, DEPUTY DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR TO PM AND ACTING FM BERLUSCONI, INFORMED CDA THAT BERLUSCONI PLANS TO ANNOUNCE ITALY'S NEW FM AT THE END OF THE JULY 24-26
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CONFERENCE OF ITALIAN AMBASSADORS TO BE HELD IN ROME. THE NEW FM, ACCORDING TO DIONISI, WILL BE FRANCO FRATTINI, CURRENTLY MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE INTELLIGENCE.

2. (C) THE NEW ITALIAN MFA WILL FOLLOW THE CANADIAN MODEL, EXPLAINED DIONISI. IT WILL BE CALLED THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE. HOWEVER, IT WILL HAVE ONLY ONE MINISTER, FRATTINI, WHO NOT ONLY KNOWS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WELL BUT IS ALSO VERY CLOSE TO BERLUSCONI AND HIS DIPLOMATIC ADVISORS. ADOLFO URSO, CURRENTLY DEPUTY MINISTER FOR PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES, WILL BECOME THE DEPUTY MINISTER AT MFA WITH ESSENTIALLY THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING FOREIGN TRADE THAT HE CURRENTLY HAS. (NOTE: IN HIS MOVE FROM THE MINISTRY OF PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES TO THE MFA, URSO WILL BRING WITH HIM HIS ENTIRE ORGANIZATION, PREVIOUSLY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE. END NOTE.) FRATTINI'S CHIEF OF STAFF WILL BE CESARE RAGAGLINI, CURRENTLY BERLUSCONI'S DEPUTY DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR. WITH FRATTINI AS FM, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MFA AND PALAZZO CHIGI (THE PM'S OFFICE) WILL BE EXCELLENT, STRESSED DIONISI. HE ADDED THAT PALAZZO CHIGI DIPLOMATIC STAFF WILL EXPAND TO MORE CLOSELY RESEMBLE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE US NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, WITH GIOVANNI CASTELLANETA, BERLUSCONI'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, REMAINING TO HEAD THE EXPANDED ORGANIZATION.

3. (C) COMMENT: EVEN AFTER ANNOUNCING FRATTINI'S APPOINTMENT, WE EXPECT BERLUSCONI, WHO HAS BEEN ACTING FM FOR EIGHT MONTHS, TO CONTINUE TO PLAY THE LEAD ROLE IN SHAPING ITALY'S FOREIGN POLICY. BERLUSCONI, IN CHOOSING A TRUSTED ADVISER FROM HIS OWN FORZA ITALIA PARTY AS FM, SEEKS TO ENSURE THE
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END OF SQUABBLES BETWEEN PALAZZO CHIGI AND THE MFA THAT ITALY EXPERIENCED UNDER FM RUGGIERO, AND LESS FREQUENTLY SINCE RUGGIERO'S RESIGNATION IN JANUARY. NO DOUBT FRATTINI WILL BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN SHAPING ITALY'S FOREIGN POLICY, BUT HE WILL ALSO BE EXPECTED TO ENSURE THAT THE MFA EXECUTES FOREIGN AND TRADE POLICY DESIGNED BY BERLUSCONI AND PALAZZO CHIGI. END COMMENT.

4. (U) POST WILL FOLLOW UP WITH BIOGRAPHIC DETAIL ON FRATTINI.
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